

# We Care Academy

Leeds City Council

Launched in 2013 in response to the high number of vacancies within the sector, Leeds City Council's We Care Academy has been extremely successful in supporting high-quality candidates into fulfilling careers in social care. The academy actively targets and works with underrepresented groups to increase the diversity of the social care workforce across the city.

Candidates attend a two-week pre-employment course covering theory and training as well as a week-long placement, with a guaranteed interview at the end. Candidates are carefully matched with employers in terms of values, geographical location and preferred service area. This ensures the candidate has the best chances of excelling at the academy and successfully securing a social care role. The academy is a collaboration between private, voluntary and independent sector providers, Jobcentre Plus and education partners. This creates a single, joint approach to finding candidates who have the right values, behaviours and attitudes, recruiting these candidates and setting a solid foundation for them to enjoy successful careers.



Looking for an interesting and rewarding job or career?

Train with the We Care Academy and join us in Adult Social Care - where every day is different and people really matter.

We're looking for people who may not have qualifications and experience, but who do have natural abilities and a caring nature and who want to make a positive difference in their community.

A variety of roles are available in a range of different settings including: • At-home care • Supported living • Residential care

There are job vacancies right across Leeds and following the successful completion of our fast-track training programme we'll look to place you as local as possible to where you live – depending on which service area you wish to work in.

As a care and support worker, you will work directly with people who have different care and support needs – such as long-term health conditions; learning disabilities; or recovering following a stay in hospital, for example.

• You will help with their day-to-day wellbeing, including personal care – perhaps preparing simple meals and drinks, chatting or going shopping • You will listen to and pay attention to what is important to them and what they can do themselves.

Following entry assessments in skills, literacy and numeracy and a short interview, you will be supported through the We Care Academy training programme • One week of nationally recognised and accredited training • Up to one week work-experience • Guaranteed job interview

To find out more, email us at [wecareacademy@leeds.gov.uk](mailto:wecareacademy@leeds.gov.uk) with your name and phone number. We will respond to you promptly.

Better Lives for people in Leeds



**“We Care Academy proactively goes out to communities, schools, and events such as careers and apprenticeship fairs to identify potential candidates for social care roles who might not otherwise approach a potential employer on their own. The academy and our team then support the candidate to complete the course and be successful in starting their career in social care.”**

Shahida Mahmood  
Organisational and Workforce Development Business Partner, Leeds City Council

Candidates attend an assessment centre, where they undertake an online values based profiling exercise (Question of Care), case study, literacy and numeracy entry level assessments and a values-based interview before they are offered a place on the programme. This ensures the course and a career in social care is right for them. During the course they receive training on Safeguarding Adults, become a Dementia Friend, and complete CACHE Level 1 Award in Preparing to Work in Adult Social Care.

Candidates can access practical support, such as financial support for travel and childcare costs, through Jobcentre Plus. Leeds City Council funds lunch vouchers for all participants and bus fares where required (and not funded by Jobcentre Plus). The academy also support candidates with all the relevant recruitment paperwork and help arrange a fully-enhanced DBS registered with the updates service - supporting movement across the sector and avoiding the need for candidates to re-apply for their certificate every time they approach a new employer.

In response to COVID-19, the course continues to run in a socially distanced way which complies with all government guidelines. Interviews and assessments are conducted and delivered using a blended approach to learning. A key support worker is assigned to all candidates to support them throughout their time on the programme and maintain regular contact. Since March 2020, the We Care Academy has successfully recruited 150 people into the care sector at a time when it needed particular support. The pre-employment course is now delivered on a fortnightly basis. This is flexible, and provides the support and training candidates need to pursue a career in social care, and the time investment and confidence employers need to identify and hire great candidates.

### Top tips when creating an academy



#### **Provide hands-on support**

Academy staff provide support to candidates, which is key to keeping them engaged and on board. Staff are passionate and invested in candidates which allows them to get to know them and tailor the support needed to increase their likelihood of success.



#### **Use key agencies and existing support**

The We Care Academy work very closely with Jobcentre Plus to leverage its offering and increase the number of recruits into the sector. The academy also take advantage of the Skills for Care I Care... Ambassador programme to ensure candidates have a clear picture of what a career in social care is like. This helps with employee retention.



#### **Build good relationships with employers**

Leeds City Council's We Care Academy have built strong relationships with employers of different sizes and service provisions. This gives candidates opportunities at a broad range of workplaces. The academy has become the first port of call for some providers – helping the programme to grow further.

To find out more contact Shahida Mahmood, Organisational and Workforce Development Business Partner on [shahida.mahmood@leeds.gov.uk](mailto:shahida.mahmood@leeds.gov.uk) or June Rollins, Senior Organisational and Workforce Development Business Partner on [june.rollins@leeds.gov.uk](mailto:june.rollins@leeds.gov.uk)